

# **MERCHANTVILLE SHADE TREE COMMISSION**

## **MINUTES, NEWS, and AGENDA**

**Minutes from the last meeting held at Boro Hall on May 16, 2016, news since then, and agenda for the next meeting to be held on Monday June 20, 2016, at 7 pm in Boro Hall, first floor.**

### **Those present in May**

Hollis Ryan, John Long, Kerry Mentzer, Kris Donohue, Joan Anderson, and Bob Paulson

### **Reading of Compliance with Open Public Meetings Act**

This meeting is being held in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., notice of which appears on the Borough website. Meetings are usually held the third Monday of each month at 7:00 pm in Boro Hall in the room on the first floor west wing.

### **Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting**

The minutes at the April meeting were not disapproved.

### **Boro Report**

Going forward, MSTC should not pay for tree work (removal, trimming, and planting) for the bike path, parks, and Boro grounds as they have separate budgets. Tree work lists for these areas are being separated out by Bob. The first list as of June 1 was sent to Katherine for action.

Katherine does not think MSTC should be charged for emergency tree work due to storms; see below.

### **New Business**

Storm damage: 213-215 Glenwood Ave

The strong thunderstorm on June 6 blew over two street London Plane trees, damaging both houses. John arranged for emergency removal by Hyperion. Katherine does not think the cost should come out of the MSTC budget.

Contracted tree work

John has gone out for quotes for removal of 5 trees from the MSTC Removal list, plus two additional trees added to the list: 23 W Walnut and 210 Westminster

2016 NJDEP Tree Recovery Campaign

Members of MSTC are planting some of the remaining seedlings.

Ordering trees to plant

Kerry and Kris sent a list of suggested planting sites and appropriate trees to purchase: 205 Plymouth Pl, 5 W Walnut, 300 and 308 Somerset, and 204 Westminster. They got OK from the residents. We may get trees from Lowes or Home Depot.

675 W Maple Ave on Euclid

Owner had a blocked sewer, probably involving tree roots. He wanted the Boro to pay for clearing out the sewer, which the Boro will not do. The owner would like the tree removed. The tree is a 2.5' DBH Oak, appears healthy, no wires. There was water leaking from the street-side base of the tree, probably the sewer. Should the tree be removed? Kris voted yes. There has been no further contact with him since May 16.

If he wants it removed, should MSTC ask him to pay the value of the tree? This is a general question that comes up every time a resident would like a tree removed.

The tree at least needs to be trimmed.

218 Springfield Ave

The resident, Sam Slattery, had asked permission to remove one of the two CCI street trees in front of his property. It has been over 6 years since they were planted.

Hollis spoke with him. He had cut down the tree without permission, leaving an 8" stump. He claims it raised the sidewalk (less than 1/4") and is near his water and gas lines. It was not near his sewer line.

For cutting down a street tree without permission, he can be fined up to \$250 plus the value of the tree (i.e. the CTE value of the remaining tree). MSTC voted to chide him in some way, with Katherine to follow up.

### Tree Maintenance Open Issues:

- 101 Church on Plymouth – it was decided to trim it; it is in wires, are they street wires (PSE&G Trim) or house wires (MSTC Trim)?
- Bike path opposite 1 Linden – dead tree in vines – add to Bike Path list for removal?
- Bike path opposite 500 W Chestnut – mostly dead tree in vines – add to Bike Path list for removal?
- 108 Volan St – resident is concerned that street tree is not doing well – has anyone looked at it?
- PSE&G Trim list has a number of entries that imply the tree is only in house wires. Since PSE&G is unlikely to trim these and there is no serious electrical hazard, should they be moved to the MSTC Trim list?

### Watering planted trees

We are getting DPW to use the MSTC water tank to water trees that have gator bags. Anything happening? Nothing new.

### CSIP sidewalk grant

There are 120 sidewalk citations. Some properties have multiple citations. All were issued at the same time to give residents equal opportunity to apply for a sidewalk grant, as it is unlikely the grant will cover all the work. Under the grant, the State provides \$20,000 and the Boro provides \$5000. Residents hire their own contractor and are reimbursed up to 60% of their cost. Because sidewalks are required to be 4' wide and not curve onto lawns, otherwise healthy trees must be removed. The grant is being administered by Bill Watson, Code Enforcement, under the supervision of Dan Sperrazza, Boro Council. Nothing new.

### DPW Tree Work

They removed two trees west of the Gazebo on the bikepath because of new cement work being done there. We suggested that two trees be planted somewhere on the bike path as replacements. John suggested Purple Plums from Platt's. Again, the cost should come out of the bike path funds. Is anything happening?

### Stump Grinding

Roy is now adding stumps as trees are removed and removing stumps as they are ground. There are currently 20 stumps remaining on the list, plus various totem poles.

Roy was not removing totem poles until more stump removal could be done because he thinks totem poles are less of a tripping hazard than stumps. Some of the totem poles probably cannot be removed by DPW.

DPW is budgetted to get a stump grinder, so will be grinding the stumps themselves.

### PSE&G tree work for us

Their chief looked at the PSE&G Removal list, and told Roy only one of the trees was in primary electric wires, so they would not work on the others. Roy will ask which tree. They also will look at the PSE&G Trim list. Nothing new.

## Old Business

### Tree Maintenance Decisions, Work Done

- 210 Westminster – large dead totem pole under wires; MSTC voted by email to add it to MSTC Removal list, and John added it to the Hyperion list
- Community Center, large tree along the east fence back of the parking area – tree looks OK from the Community Center side, but is hollow in the back, and needs to be removed. It was added to the Community Center list.
- 104 Plymouth – resident requested permission to treat street Ash tree for Emerald Ash Borer – MSTC voted to give her permission; it will cost her \$500 every two years.
- Is maintenance of street trees alongside the bike path or parks and grounds added to those lists, or to the MSTC lists? (Example: tree needing trimming on Myrtle Ave, first tree from Linden

between the sidewalk and curb along Wellwood Park.) MSTC voted to include them in the Boro bike path, parks, and grounds list.

- 23 W Walnut – large dead tree reported by Kerry and Kris, no wires; on the current Watch list; it was added to the MSTC Removal list, and John added it to the current Hyperion list.
- Bob spoke with Jason of Public Works about cutting the vines at the base around trees at the west end of the bike path. They are choking the trees. (There are other places in town where vines are choking street trees, e.g. the first block south of Maple on Springfield.) MSTC voted that it was OK to cut the vines.
- Public Works Yard – Roy Adair reports two trees that have many dead branches in them, no wires – of the four trees on the right side of the yard, MSTC voted via email to remove the 2nd and 3rd trees. They were added to the Boro list (bike path, parks, and grounds).

#### MSTC Boro email and voicemail

The MSTC email is accessed at <http://webmail.merchantvillenj.gov/>. The user name is [shadetree@merchantvillenj.gov](mailto:shadetree@merchantvillenj.gov), and the password is blackoak. Bob is currently answering it. The MSTC voicemail is extension 373 at the Boro main mail phone number (856) 662-2474. We voted to have Denise Brouse remove this extension, as no one was answering it.

#### Tree Inventory

Hollis's new inventory will be accessible from smart phones (iPhone, Android) and tablets (iPad etc). You will be able to view the current inventory and make updates. John received iTree training at the NJ STF meeting. Hollis will get the app working as soon as he can. Nothing new.

#### Memorial Tree Report

The Shade Tree Memorial Trust fund had \$1338.38 as of 5/17/16. This fund contains Shade Tree donations, and can only be used to purchase trees and memorial plaques.

We have ordered plaques from William V. Sipple & Son in Milford DE ((800) 673-9041). They charge \$150 for a plaque (no more than 3 lines, no more than 21 characters per line including spaces). We charge \$200 for a plaque. For memorial trees, we charge the cost to buy and plant the tree.

On Arbor Day we planted a Tricolor Beech on the bike path opposite St Peters parking lot for Nancy and Bob Page in honor of their son and his wife

#### MSTC Budget

Budget Committed includes money spent and money we owe as of 5/17/16. Budget Approved is the budget allocated by the Boro. Only the totals are important. The 2016 approved budget is \$15,000.

The Memorial Trust fund is separate.

MSTC Fund*	2015 Budget			2016 Budget		
	Committed	Approved	Remaining	Committed	Approved	Remaining
Tree and Stump Removal, Tree Trimming	\$9500 <sup>d</sup>	\$10,000	\$500	\$7750 <sup>a</sup>	\$13,000	\$5250
Purchasing and Planting New Trees	\$3870 <sup>e</sup>	\$1000	-\$2870	\$219 <sup>b</sup>	\$1000	\$781
Training and Miscellaneous	\$520 <sup>f</sup>	\$1000	\$480	\$85 <sup>c</sup>	\$1000	\$915
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$13,890</b>	<b>\$12,000</b>	<b>-\$1890</b>	<b>\$ 8054</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>	<b>\$ 6946</b>

\*not including Shade Tree Memorial Trust fund

<sup>e</sup>2015 Fernbrook Nursery order of 12 trees \$2200

<sup>f</sup>2015 NJ Shade Tree Federation dues \$95

<sup>f</sup>2015 Arbor Day Foundation dues \$35

<sup>d</sup>2015 Hyperion removals (113 Woodbine: \$800; Wellwood trunk \$550) \$1350

<sup>e</sup>2015 Elite Landscaping to plant 12 trees \$1670  
<sup>d</sup>2015 Weldon hanging branch removal \$150  
<sup>d</sup>2015 Garden State stump grinding \$2000  
<sup>d</sup>2015 Hyperion removals (9 trees) \$3000 \_open, not yet paid  
<sup>d</sup>2015 CC Tree Expert trimming \$3000 paid  
<sup>f</sup> 2015 NJ STF meeting attendance – 2 people for 2 days \$390 paid  
<sup>a</sup>2016 Hyperion removal (1 additional) - \$450  
<sup>a</sup> 2016 CC Tree Experts trimming (22.8 hours) - \$5700  
<sup>a</sup>2016 Hyperion removal of 5 trees \$1600  
<sup>b</sup> 2016 Home Depot – purchase 2 trees \$219  
<sup>c</sup>2016 Arbor Day Foundation dues \$35  
<sup>c</sup> 2016 Core training Kris \$50

**Next Meeting after June 20:** July 18, 2016 (third Monday) 7 pm in Boro Hall.

**Respectfully submitted by:** Bob Paulson, secretary